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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the experiences of Salvadoran refugees who fled their country in the 1980s and came to the United States seeking political asylum during the Salvadoran civil war. The increased number of Salvadoran students in the school districts of Northern Virginia (the Greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area), where more than 200,000 Salvadorans have settled, has had a number of important consequences, especially since Latino students are becoming the largest segment of the school population in an increasing number of schools. This paper discusses the need to focus on the positive knowledge and experiences that Salvadoran parents and students bring to Virginia schools, and the need to look for more creative, alternative solutions to improve their academic performance. It closes with a case study of a family literacy program launched in Arlington (Virginia) by a partnership of grassroots organizations that addresses the needs of Latino parents with limited English language fluency and limited literacy skills. In Arlington, most Salvadoran adults have less than 6 years of schooling, and most are not enrolled in an adult education program. Their English skills are limited, and many hold two or three jobs in an effort to make ends meet. The Empowering Families through Literacy program is a multifaceted program that works with the entire Latino family, teaching adults while providing enrichment and tutoring activities for their children. The project portrays adult students as individuals who, despite lacking formal schooling, have been educated informally by many life experiences and bring a fully developed language system to the classroom. The experiences in acculturation of one particular family illustrate the factors that bring families to the literacy program. Moving beyond invisibility will require that Latino students, including those of Salvadoran background, benefit from educational programs that acknowledge, celebrate, and develop their creativity. Educating parents and increasing their participation in their children's educations will help ensure better education for Latino students. (Contains 38 endnotes.) (SLD)

ED 424 341

Moving Beyond Invisibility:

The Sociocultural Strengths of the Latino Community

(The Case of Arlington's Salvadoran Families)

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Moving Beyond Invisibility: The Sociocultural Strengths of the Latino Community (The Case of Arlington's Salvadoran Families)[1]

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"Education is a social process ...
Education is growth ...
Education is not preparation for life...
Education is life itself."

~ John Dewey ~
My Pedagogic Creed, 1897

This paper grew out of the need for an understanding of the Latino K-12 student population currently enrolled in Northern Virginia school divisions. It will focus on the experiences of the Salvadorans refugees who fled their country throughout the 1980s and arrived to the United States seeking political asylum. Their story is intimately related to American involvement in the Central American crisis. More than two hundred thousand of them chose the Greater Washington Metropolitan area as their new home.

The increased number of Salvadoran students in Northern Virginia school districts has had a number of important implications, especially since these Latino students are increasingly becoming the largest segment of the school population. The education of their children is often one of the most important priorities in the lives of these refugees. The big challenge lays in the fact that most of these youngsters arrive to our schools with little preparation for or knowledge of what to expect.

This paper discusses the need to begin focusing on the more positive knowledge and experiences that Salvadoran parents and students bring to our schools, as well as the need to look for more creative, alternative solutions to improve their academic performance. It will close with the case study of a family literacy program launched two years ago in Arlington, Virginia, by a partnership of grassroots organizations that addresses the needs of Latino parents with limited English language fluency and limited literacy skills. The outcome of this partnership is promising to be a successful educational practice.

I

The Latino Student Population: An Overview

Latinos are the fastest growing population in the United States and as such, they will be playing a vital role in America's future. Demographic projections suggest that in the next decades Latinos will rapidly become the largest minority group in the United States. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, from being 11% of the nation's 1996 population, in the year 2050 they will become 25%. The same Census report suggests that from 1995 to 2000, the Latino population alone will contribute 37% of the Nation's growth; from 2000 to 2020, it will contribute 44%; and from 2020 to 2050, 62%. [2]

The size of the above figures underscores the importance of the educational challenge ahead of us. Furthermore, the U.S. Bureau of the Census projected the Latinos as the youngest population group in the nation. In 1995 half of its population was twenty-six years old or younger. These figures suggest that the percentage of the Latino elementary school-age (5-13 years old) and high school-age (14-17 years old) population will continue to grow in the next few decades.[3]

Due to a number of socioeconomic, political and cultural factors, in addition to the recent demographic changes, the quality of the Latino K-12 education in the United States has continued to deteriorate. Numerous sources, including the White House, report that the academic achievement gap that separates Latino students from mainstream students continues to widen. Latino students continue to fail in our schools. (Cf. The President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans: *Our Nation on the Fault Line: Hispanic American Education*, September 1996).[4]

In analyzing the American educational system, the members of The President's Advisory Commission identified serious inadequacies as the lack of access to early childhood, gifted and talented, remedial or special education programs. Overall, they characterized Latino education in America by its "... history of neglect, oppression, and periods of wanton denial of opportunity" and suggested that today the American educational system continues to "... deny equitable educational opportunities to Hispanic Americans." [5]

When discussing minority education in the United States, especially Latino education, we often tend to overlook the important role that the student's family and culture play in the overall learning process. At the beginning of this century, the eminent Russian psychologist Lev S. Vygotsky reminded us that "... human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them." [6] A classic educational

axiom is that parents or other care givers are the students first teachers. However, when working with low-income, migrant and immigrant minority families, teachers and administrators fail to acknowledge and adapt to the different ways how the home and the community environments play in the overall educational process of these students.

More recently Shirley Brice Heath in *Ways With Words*, and Luis Moll's work with "funds of knowledge" have reminded us of the tremendous untapped knowledge, experiences and resources that students bring to school. Educators should focus on the positive experiences that these students bring with them and on their potential contributions to the overall educational process rather than on their alleged limitations or on their formal academic deficiencies.[7]

When analyzing the lack of success of programs aimed at reversing the pattern of school failure among minority students, Jim Cummins and others have suggested that one of the reasons for failure often is that these initiatives did not focus in altering the existing traditional *relationships* between teachers, parents and students and between schools and their communities. Therefore, Cummins emphasized the need to profoundly redefine the way how classroom teachers and school administrators interact with the students and communities they serve.[8] This becomes particularly important in school divisions such as those of Northern Virginia that have experienced major demographic changes in a relatively short period of time.

Shift our paradigms

When dealing with educational challenges and problems, educators often continue using -- consciously or unconsciously-- outdated theoretical models and paradigms with devastating effects on important segments of our student population. For example, despite acknowledging the inadequacy and limitations of such models as the *one-size-fits-all*, the d*eficit*, and the *factory*, these paradigms continue influencing the way how our educational stakeholders analyze, design and carry out programs.

Often when dealing with language minority or immigrant students, instead of looking for more creative, alternative solutions, we unsuccessfully attempt to "tighten the screw" rather than to take advantage of all the strengths that these new populations bring with them. This may de due to the fact, as UNESCO's Manish Jain has suggested, that over the past three hundred years educators have allowed the *modernity paradigm* to play a significant role in shaping our notions of democracy, development, freedom and growth.[9] This, despite the acknowledgment that many policies influenced or inspired by this *paradigm* have been inadequate or continue being challenged, contested and renegotiated.[10]

Empowering Students

One of the biggest challenges that our schools face today is how to *empower* all its students--mainstream and minority--with resourceful decision-making skills, so that each youngster can develop their full potential and foster personal responsibility for life long learning. This is not an easy task, especially in areas such as Northern Virginia where school divisions are experiencing major demographic changes.

I posit that to promote the self-actualization of each of our students, our schools must become learning communities, environments where teachers, parents and students have the freedom to look at the world from different perspectives in a creative, responsible way, and where each individual has the opportunity to review, correct or improve his or her own efforts. This is particularly important in multicultural environments where students and teachers bring to the classroom different learning styles, world views and epistemological approaches. Experience suggests that a side-effect of the respectful acknowledgment and celebration of cultural differences often becomes the decisive factor in the empowerment of our minority students.

Diversity in the Latino Community: Intragroup and Intergroup

One of the strengths of the Latino community, is its diversity. As a conceptual category, Latino includes people belonging to different academic, cultural, economic, ethnic, linguistic, national-origin, racial, religious and social backgrounds. Therefore, educators and school administrators must avoid oversimplifying the intrinsic complexity of this significant sector of the American student population especially when it comes to newcomers, such as Salvadoran immigrants, or other less known groups as the Afro-Latinos.

Anthropologist Suzanne Oboler has reminded us that *Hispanics*/Latinos in the United States "... all sing a different song."[11] This is due to the fact that the various populations of Latin American descent currently living in the United States came to this nation from more than twenty different countries. Furthermore, when analyzing the origins as well the modes of incorporation into American society, we discover a tremendous range of different historical, political, economic and social processes.[12] It would be an overstatement to suggest that in this context, generalizations are not only dangerous but often impossible.

Latinos not only came from many different countries, belong to all socioeconomic groups, but also arrived to the United States due to many different circumstances. Furthermore, there are important differences in the socialization process of U.S.-born Latinos and those born and raised in Latin American countries.

As Aida Hurtado has pointed out, an understanding of the Latino population must acknowledge important *intragroup* (i.e., between different Latino groups) and *intergroup* (between Latinos and Anglos) differences that include such areas as socioeconomic class, ethnic dynamics, "familism," and Spanish-language maintenance.[13] While some Latinos come from highly-educated and

sophisticated urban backgrounds, others came from isolated rural areas with limited access to formal education. Therefore, we find a tremendous variation in the educational background of the foreign born--ranging from highly trained professionals all the way to illiterate people--even within the same national and ethnic subgroup. The migratory experience is also highly diverse. While some people carefully planned their immigration, such as in the cases of family reunification or in the so-called cases of "brain drain," other Latinos fled their countries on very short notice due to war or civil strife.

Sociological research has traditionally portrayed Latinos as a disadvantaged segment of the American society which must often cope with such structural barriers as labor force discrimination, low earnings and unstable employment opportunities. However, by using a deficit-focused model to analyze Latino issues or by overemphasizing the past history of discrimination and oppression, we nourish an overly negative perspective and a limited vision. It is important for educators to move away from a deficit-focused model and to move towards a more positive approach inspired in a resiliency model that recognizes and supports the vitality and that builds upon strengths of the Latino community.

The Latino Family in the United States

The Latino family, although undergoing important changes, continues playing a critical role in the United States. At home, Latino children have traditionally been nurtured by a large number of relatives--uncles, aunts, grandparents, godparents-- and friends. However, direct parental involvement in their children schools' or in school activities has neither been expected nor encouraged. As Morton Inger has commented, the American educational system has failed to take advantage of the multiple strengths offered by Latino families, especially those low-income families where the parents are still not fluent in the English language.[14]

Some authors, such as Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach, have highlighted the role played by family networks to recent arrivals by sharing with them their experiences, by providing them with footholds, and by helping relatives in solving a variety of logistical problems.[15] Latino families play a pivotal role in networks of communication, socialization, distribution of resources, preservation of cultural forms, and immigrant resettlement. This is due to such factors as their internal dynamics, resilience and mutability. On the gender side, for example, out of economic necessity a growing number of Latino women are now participating in the labor force, often due to the fact that their husbands hold poorly paid, disadvantaged positions. Also, as a result of divorce or separation, a growing number of Latino families are currently headed by women, as is also the case in other segments of the American society.

One of the biggest challenges faced by School Divisions that have a large Latino enrollment, is how to increase Latino parental involvement. There are no easy solutions nor quick fixes. Traditional recruitment efforts, such as massive mailings or inviting parents to get involved in the existing PTAs, are ineffective or fail. Approaches have to change. Cultural sensitive recruitment strategies are necessary. Learning more about the specific interests and needs of Latino parents

often requires a more personalized approach. These may include home visits by school staff where teachers and administrators learn the parents' particular needs and views. Often school agendas do not coincide with those of their minority parents. Usually on the top of many minority parental lists we find baby-sitting assistance while attending meetings, transportation, and the use of the Spanish-language.

Further research is needed in understanding how Latino families, especially those who immigrated to the United States from war-torn countries such as El Salvador or Guatemala, cope with such issues as educational attainment, social mobility, health, and community development. An additional issue that must be taken into consideration is the different ways how refugee children and adults who have been exposed to traumatic events, threatened to death or who have witnessed murders cope with these anxieties.

Today many Latino youngsters living in the United States are growing up in a very different way than how their parents grew up. Very often these students desperately need adult mentors who will understand their emotional and psychological needs and become positive role models. On occasions this becomes particularly challenging since Latino students often do not see others like them "who have made it" in America. Furthermore, some youngsters become resentful of their cultural background and may eventually even feel ashamed of their parents who are struggling to survive in America.

One of the challenges faced by the children of recently immigrated, low-income Latino families, lies in the fact that in the after-school hours these youngsters are often brought up in an unsupervised, alien, at times hostile, environment. In order to address these needs, schools serving a large percentage of very poor Latino families, may need to move towards the direction of a community-oriented pedagogy, and employ the often untapped resources offered by the Latino families, especially their extended families, together with local churches and a number of grassroots community organizations. After-school programs that provide safe and positive environments, and that focus on students' strengths and successes do make a difference.[16]

II

Arlington's Salvadoran Community

Today there is a tremendous academic achievement gap between mainstream and minority K-12 students. This gap is resulting in a painful pattern of school failure between Latino and other minority students. Public education is not a *zero-sum game*, where winners gain at the expense of losers. It can and should be a win-win experience, where we all learn from each other.

I will argue this morning that if we really want all K-12 students to develop to their respective individual potentials and succeed, we may need to borrow from the economic game theory the "*non-zero sum game*" concept, where every player can be a winner. According to this model, cooperation, teamwork and the tapping on the knowledge and resources that each individual brings is the key to success.

Education, as Paulo Freire with many other educational philosophers including John Dewey has reminded us, must be an enterprise of freedom, democracy, liberation, dialogue and hope. Freire strongly believed that by empowering all students with a sense of hope and possibility and by counteracting the effects of a psychology of oppression, education could improve the human condition. For him education was a liberating enterprise. He also reminded us that since our schools are part of a larger social world, teachers and educators must look beyond their classroom walls, and extend into the lives and struggles of the communities in which they work.[17]

This morning we are going to talk about some educational challenges currently faced by an important segment of Latino K-12 student population: the relatively recently arrived Salvadoran immigrants and their offspring.[18] As all of you may recall, as a result of the 1979 - 1992 civil war that practically destroyed El Salvador, over one million people fled that country. Most came to the United States. Of these, more than two hundred thousand chose the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area as their new home.

It would be an understatement to suggest that neither the Salvadoran refugees nor our public schools, cities or counties were prepared to deal with these unexpected challenges. As in all refugee situations, there was no time for planning. Those who came to the Nation's capital were mostly very poor Spanish-speaking refugees who fled isolated rural areas located in the nation's *Zona Oriental* (eastern region), where formal education was not always readily available nor a priority. Their transition from El Salvador to the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area was abrupt. Figuratively speaking, we could suggest that most of these children or their parents were "helicoptered" from their rural, isolated Salvadoran villages, directly to one of the most thriving cosmopolitan areas of the United States.

For the public schools in Northern Virginia, the sudden influx of the Salvadoran student population posed tremendous challenges. One of these implied the need to transform an educational system traditionally designed to serve a predominantly white middle-class student population into one that could educate and empower these recently arrived very poor Spanish-speaking students and guarantee their academic success in the American system.

The 12-Year Civil War: 1979 - 1982

In 1979 the Salvadoran civil war exploded and the largest migratory wave in Salvadoran history began.[19] The war lasted twelve years. One-fifth of the Salvadoran population left the country and became refugees mostly in the United States. Of the estimated one million Salvadorans currently living in the U.S., some 90 percent arrived after 1979. The 1980s were one of the most violent periods in Salvadoran history. Between 1980 and 1983 an average of 20 Salvadorans were killed every day by the military or by death squads. Arlington County, Virginia, as several other jurisdictions in the United States (cf. Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago), opened its doors and housed tens of thousands of Salvadorans who had fled their war-torn country. The early arrivals told stories of citizens kidnaped and "disappeared" by the so-called "Security Forces" and massacres of hundreds of peasants. These reports stimulated thousands of U.S. citizens to participate in solidarity actions. Arlington County and its nearby jurisdictions became the foci of one of the largest Salvadoran refugee waves: the one coming primarily from its Zona Oriental, which during the early 1980s witnessed fierce war.

The vast majority of the Salvadoran who came to Arlington were either political or economic refugees fleeing from rural areas. Individuals, not families, fled. Young male adults were the first to leave, for the fear of being forced to serve either in the military or in the opposing camps. Children were left behind with relatives, while their parents saved enough money to bring them, a process which often took many years. Later families slowly became reunited in Arlington. Nearly all of those who came during the 1980s, came by land, experiencing long and dangerous journeys through Guatemala and Mexico, to the United States. Few of them spoke English and, as most refugees, they arrived to Arlington with minimal possessions and often lacking legal documents.

Many of those who came --adults and children-- had never lived in an urban setting. Almost all had experienced and survived a war and had been directly exposed to different types of violent events such as murders, threats of life, or political torture. Therefore, they felt that it was worth to leave everything behind --their family, possessions, community-- and come to the safety of Arlington. They all brought with them the scars from these traumas. Under these conditions, often they had to adjust alone to life in a different culture and with minimal preparation and resources.

The arrival of the Salvadoran refugees was immediately felt in Arlington. From a demographic point of view, U.S. Census data report that during the 1980s Arlington's *Hispanic* population increased by 163 percent, while the County's overall population only increased by 12 percent.[20] During the 1980s, three out of four *net* new residents to Arlington were of *Hispanic* origin; one

third of them came from El Salvador. Arlington soon became the Commonwealth of Virginia's jurisdiction with the largest number of immigrant children and youth.

In 1998, Salvadorans continue being the largest Latino group in Arlington. On the average, they are younger than other County residents, and more likely live in larger households with children and other family members. [21] This is particularly important in a county were more than half of the households are non-family households, and were 81% of the residents do not have school-age children. [22]

The profile of most of the Salvadoran adults currently living in Arlington includes the following characteristics: (a) Adults with less than six years of schooling, and currently not enrolled in an adult education program; (b) Limited English-language proficiency; (c) Working in two or three jobs to help ends meet; (d) Difficulty in addressing, on a daily basis, various surviving needs (e.g., housing, food, transportation, literacy, working conditions, medical insurance). A significant number of these adults have children enrolled at an Arlington Public School. Last year the school system identified 433 Spanish speaking parents with children enrolled in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program who had not gone beyond the fifth grade of school. Several of these parents are either illiterate or functionally illiterate in Spanish and do not speak English.

From a geographic point of view, Arlington's Latino population is not evenly distributed. The 1990 Census figures suggest that most Latinos live in eleven of the county's thirty-nine census tracks. These eleven census tracks are located in South Arlington. In these, the Latino population was *over* 13.5 percent (i.e., County's overall percentage of Latinos) of their total population. Furthermore, in two of these eleven census tracks, Latinos represented more than 35 percent of the population.[23]

During the past decades, international migration has had a direct impact in the Arlington School Division. Different migratory waves have passed through the county and left its imprint. During the early 1960s, a number of Cuban exile students attended Arlington schools later moving elsewhere. During the 1970s, Arlington received a significant contingent of Asian students mostly from Viet Nam, Laos and Korea, who after several years also began moving out of Arlington into nearby counties. Later, the 1980s experienced a large influx of Salvadoran students who currently constitute some 20% of the entire Arlington student population.

School statistic figures illustrate the dramatic increase in the number of immigrant and language minority students. For example, in 1975 Arlington only had 879 non-English speaking students, the majority of whom were of Asian background. Two decades later, in 1995 Arlington had 6,862 students (i.e., 40 percent of the School Division's student population) who identified a language other than English as their first language, although a significant percentage of these students were born in the United States.[24] Also, in this same school year (1995), 3,479 students (i.e., 20 percent) were enrolled in English-for-Speakers-of-Other-Language programs. It is worth highlighting the fact that 70% of the students who identified a language other than English as their

mother tongue were Spanish-speakers; the great majority of them had Salvadoran ancestry. The remainder spoke over 62 different languages.

The current educational level of the younger Salvadoran generation living in Arlington has to do with the year in which these youngsters fled El Salvador and enrolled at an American school. For example, many of the youngsters who arrived during the first years of the Civil War (1979-mid-1980s) have already finished their K-12 education and are either enrolled in colleges or working while the more recent arrivals are still pursuing their K-12 education.

Another effect of these demographic changes is the fact that Arlington schools are increasingly becoming economically and educationally bimodal. One segment of the student population comes from high income, highly educated families, while the other can be categorized as low income with low educational backgrounds. As an example, I would like to briefly describe two of the county's neighborhood schools.

Glencarlyn Elementary School is located in the Columbia Heights West neighborhood, one of the two poorest census tracks in Arlington. Overall, this neighborhood is characterized by the high percentage of families living in poverty, by its large minority and immigrant population, by its limited English proficiency, as well as by the poor academic levels of its student population. This neighborhood elementary school, with its 560 students is from an ethnic point of view, the most diverse in the county: 53% of its students are Latino, 21% Black (i.e., African or African Americans), 20% Asian and 7% white. Some 82% of the student population is eligible for free lunch, and some 55% of the students are enrolled in English-as-a-second-language classes.[25]

These figures contrast dramatically with those of another elementary school, Jamestown, located almost six miles north. This neighborhood, with its 493 students is perhaps, from an ethnic point of view, the least diverse in the county. At this school, 93% of the student population is white, 4% are Latino, and 3% Asian. There are no students on free lunch and five are enrolled in English-as-a-second-language classes.

Our Educational Challenge

Currently over 3,000 Salvadoran students are enrolled in Arlington Public schools. Their presence alone constitutes a tremendous challenge both to the students and their families, as well as to the school system. Paraphrasing Nan Henderson, I would suggest that educators should approach these language-minority students with an attitude of optimism, strength-identification and strength-building.[26] Therefore, there is a need to take into consideration the special characteristics of this student population and adapt the school system to better serve their needs.

Considering that most of these children or their families came from rural areas which traditionally had limited formal educational opportunities, enrollment in Arlington schools also meant a major change in these children's lives. At our schools suddenly these youngsters often found themselves in an environment where almost all teachers, students, and administrators spoke,

dressed and acted in a very different way. Therefore, the student's self-esteem and well-being was challenged from the outset. The beginning of their American school experience often also coincided with their family reunification, after being left back in El Salvador for many years with their grandparents, friends or relatives while their parents earned enough money for their trip.

Reunited Families

Family reunification has become a fairly common, although traumatic experience, in the lives of many Salvadoran students. As mentioned earlier, during the twelve-year Salvadoran civil war, individual family members fled their country. Due to a number of reasons, finances being one of them, entire families did not leave together. Usually the father was the first in fleeing, leaving the wife and children back home. Once established in the United States, he would begin sending monies to bring the other family members one by one. This process took many years. During these years, many adults got divorced and built new families.

Often the children who were left behind in the village did not fully *understand* the reasons why their parents had left them. Like most rural dwellers, they also witnessed civil war casualties, including the tragic deaths of close relatives and acquaintances. However, during their long years of separation, in many ways these youngsters also rebuilt their lives. They continued living in small communal jurisdictions, usually with their grandparents or guardians, and were members of extended families. Communication with their parents in the United States helped them raise unrealistic expectations about their future life in America.

The entire process of family reunification often became one of most traumatic experiences in these children's lives. The trip alone, traveling with professional "border smugglers" (locally know as *coyotes)* who helped them cross Guatemala, Mexico all the way to the United States, became a highly stressful event often intensified by a feeling of insecurity. [27] Upon arrival to their Arlington home, they often found themselves in an alien family environment. In addition to becoming reacquainted with their parents, on occasions they found that they had built new families. Furthermore, their parents were rarely home, since most of the adults in the household simultaneously held two or three menial, low paying service jobs.

Housing in Arlington is often stressful for these newcomers. Due to the high cost of living, Salvadoran families usually live in substandard, often overcrowded apartments or subdivided house units that are shared with other adults (relatives or acquaintances). As indicated earlier, in Arlington, Salvadorans tend to be concentrated in two census tracks. In addition to living in an impersonal metropolitan area, youngsters soon had to learn how to interact with members of other ethnic and racial groups.

Reversal of Parent-Child Roles

One of the biggest challenges experienced by Salvadoran families living in the United States, is the reversal of parent-child roles. As indicated earlier, the majority of the adults who arrived to the Arlington area had either limited or no formal education and spoke no English. A few hundred of them acknowledged being illiterate both in Spanish and English. Adults also had to devote their entire time to work and make ends meet.

At school and in the community, Salvadoran children learned English language faster than their parents. Thanks to their bilingual and literacy skills, these children began to fill an important communication void in their mostly monolingual households. They became the family interpreter, messengers and translator. Therefore, children often read, translated or interpreted correspondence between schools, landlords, and other sectors of their American society.

Parenting during the teen years, especially, when living in a different sociocultural environment, can be a difficult task. The teen years alone are usually challenging for both children and their parents. Among some traditional Salvadoran families, a different set of problems develops when their children become increasingly socialized in American middle class cultural mores while their parents continue attempting to run their house according to old traditions. Generational disagreements become exacerbated with cultural and language differences. Discussions and arguments range from dress codes, to dating and in the case of young adults the desire of living independently.

III

Empowering Recent Immigrant Students

The changing demographics of the student population in a suburban American school district poses distinct challenges to its educational stakeholders. Several educational issues must be revised if not transformed, especially the *one-size-fits-all* model. In the midst of a process of demographic changes, school systems must take into consideration the differing abilities, interests, learning styles, needs and socioeconomic backgrounds of all its students--including both the high achievers as well as the disadvantaged--and work together with them to develop all their potential. In order to achieve it, every student should be inspired, motivated and expected to learn. It is important to focus on children's successes and to value the contributions that their parents make to the educational process. Deficit models should give way to empowerment experiences. School systems must instill youngsters with a sense of pride and ownership of their educational experience.

Empowering Families Through Literacy (EFTL) Program.

I want to share with you a family literacy program which I, along with a group of volunteer Latino professionals, launched two years ago in Arlington, Virginia. The Empowering Families Through Literacy program is a multi-faceted one that works with entire Latino families--teaching illiterate or functionally illiterate adult immigrants literacy and arithmetic skills in Spanish, while at the same time providing tutoring and enrichment activities for their children.[28]

Working with a shoe-string budget, the project is sponsored by an Arlington chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), George Mason University, Arlington Public Schools, and the Mexican Embassy. EFTL offers two hours of instruction at a community center on Saturday mornings. During its first year, an average of ten families at a time benefitted from the program.

The program recognizes the link between undereducated adults and educationally at-risk children. It targets a segment of the language minority population that has traditionally not participated in more conventional programs serving Spanish-speaking immigrants with limited formal education. Some of the program's main features include a dynamic family involvement, flexibility, attunement to immigrant family needs, and a strong focus on improving the literacy skills of Spanish-speaking immigrants living in an English-language environment.

Adult Latinos eighteen years or older, with children attending Arlington Public Schools, constitute the target population. Because the vast majority of parents with limited literacy skills have not yet learned the English language or do not speak English fluently, these adults have less access to

state and local conventional English literacy programs.

Origins of the Program

Two years ago a group of Latino parents brought to LULAC's attention that one of the main barriers Latino families encountered in their dealings with our local public schools was not only their limited English language fluency, but also their limited literacy skills. Based on a needs assessment through informal interviews conducted by LULAC volunteers with adults with limited educational background, parents expressed the urgency of taking literacy classes taught by bilingual teachers for the purpose of improving their reading and writing skills, completing forms and as one parent expressed "to learn how to write their children's names." Further surveys determined that at least 450 Spanish-speaking parents in the Arlington public school system (over 18,000 students) acknowledged having very limited, if any formal education. It was determined that many school parents could not read at all in Spanish, much less in English. Furthermore, their busy schedules--often holding two or three jobs--severely restricted their ability to enroll in any adult education class.

These literacy figures came as a surprise to many Arlingtonians. As many of you are aware, Arlington is known for its quality public schools, for having a highly educated population, and in 1998 for having a more than $9,300 per pupil annual school expenditure. Likewise, county figures suggest that more than 50% of Arlington residents are college graduates and over 25% of these hold advanced degrees.

EFTL's Goals and its Experiential Learning Methodology

The project portrays adult students as individuals who despite lacking formal schooling, have been "informally" educated by many life experiences and bring to the classroom a fully developed language system. The project has multiple effects. On the one had, it prepares and motivates parents to become more effective learners and productive citizens. On the other hand, parents who attend school themselves are more likely to promote literacy activities to their children and to take greater interest in what happens at school. The project also helps parents with children attending public schools in raising their awareness of the American educational, cultural and political realities in which they currently live, increasing, in this way, their ability to control and improve simultaneously their children's as well as their own lives.

Using a participatory curriculum, our goal is to help adult students learn how to read and write in Spanish and to assist them in making the transition to English literacy within the first two years. The provision of age-appropriate academic enrichment opportunities to their children constitutes an important element. While the adult sessions take place, their school-age children are tutored at three distinct levels (e.g., preschool, elementary and secondary levels) in the same facility.

Recent research on language minority populations conducted by my George Mason University colleagues Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier have confirmed that one of the key

predictors of academic success is to provide students academic instruction through their first language for as long as possible, then later to move into cognitive complex academic instruction in their second language.[29] These findings reinforce our approach when teaching Latino adults with a limited formal educational background as well as a limited background in the English language. Therefore, by teaching parents how to read and write *initially* in their mother tongue, the EFTL program will *later* teach these language minority adults immigrants how to read and write in English-as-a-second language. The program also promotes parental support for Latino children to achieve higher academic standards in Arlington.

The lessons learned in Latin American popular education programs, especially those inspired on the theories of the late Paulo Freire, have provided the EFTL instructors with several insights.[30] All students are active participants in the classroom dynamics. Based on an initial needs assessment, the adult literacy curriculum is based on the learners desires, necessities and limitations. All sessions incorporate a listening and dialogue phase. This enables the instructor, while dialoguing with the students, to identify critical social issues in the students' lives while simultaneously allowing the students to support each other in addressing their daily challenges while improving their literacy skills.

Hunter College Sociologist John Hammond, who taught literacy to Salvadoran peasants in the midst of that nation's civil war, and who currently teaches graduate students at the City University of New York, has identified a number of important lessons for American educators.[31] He highlights how the poor setting of education in economically depressed rural areas located in a war zone creates a great instructional opportunity. In his view, the success of the Salvadoran popular educational experiences was due to the fact that these teachers--many of themselves poorly educated-- tailored their curriculum and methods to promote learning in circumstances of poverty and conflict. These teachers, making intensive use of the dialogical method, encouraged the active participation of students in the classroom and assisted them in the development of a critical consciousness. Popular schools were also dependent on the active support of their communities which allowed anyone, of whatever level of knowledge and intellectual skill, to learn.

Our Adult Students

All of the parents who have participated in the EFTL program are middle-aged, low-income adults with serious family and job responsibilities. Some of them acknowledged a few years of ineffective elementary education in their rural communities, which was interrupted for various reasons. One or two decades later and now living in the United States, these same individuals decided to enroll in EFTL literacy program despite their hectic lives.

One of the first challenges faced by the EFTL instructors was to provide these adult students and their children with a sense of possibility. For these highly motivated families, their participation in the literacy program meant a new start in their formal educational process. They were not, however, starting from scratch.

Illiterate parents brought to the classroom years of knowledge, skills and experience which when properly identified by their instructors, have helped enrich their learning process. The acknowledgment, celebration and value of the students culture, knowledge and experiences filled a number of functions. It provided the instructor with great opportunities to actively engage in the educational process while boosting the students motivation and morale. Several challenges remained. Some of these, for example, included helping the students develop study routines especially for those living in mostly print-free apartments.

The Garcia Family[32]

Since the beginning of the EFTL family literacy program, José Garcia's family has been one of the most enthusiastic participants. Born in El Salvador's *Zona Oriental* (eastern region) in 1950, his family worked in agriculture. As a child, his parents moved to neighboring Honduras, where they worked for ten years as sharecroppers until the 1969 so-called Honduras-Salvadoran *"Soccer War"* broke and they were forced to return to their village. As a peasant, José had limited opportunities to attend school and was expected to help his parents work in the fields. He never learned how to read and write in Spanish.

At the age of 19, José married a fellow villager and with her raised a family of four boys and a girl. They settled in their home village. Ten years later, in 1979 the bloody 12-year civil war broke out in El Salvador. Despite living fairly close to a military base, their village was fairly safe until 1985. Suddenly, things dramatically changed. The bloodshed hit home and both the guerrilla and the Salvadoran army forcefully begun raising troops by levying-in-mass all able bodied men. The search of local houses for food and weapons also became rampant. His home was searched several times. Life, especially for all able-bodied men, became increasingly dangerous.

That same year, while the guerrilla forces were holding a public meeting near his home, the military forces broke in. The fire exchange killed five bystanders, and forced everybody to flee or seek shelter. The military tied the hands and feet of the victims' corpse to a pole, and forced José and a few other villagers to carry the corpses to the cemetery. This experience alone, heavily traumatized him, along with the fear of compulsory enrollment either by military or guerrilla services.

Fleeing War-Torn El Salvador

Together with a group of twelve close male relatives, José decided to flee to the United States. None of them spoke English. These were the years of President Ronald Reagan's Central American policy. They were aware that in the U.S. border immigration officials usually deported refugees from countries the administration supported, like El Salvador and Guatemala. However, they were also cognizant that in the United States over 500 religious congregations had began a refugee advocacy network inspired on the antebellum underground railroad for escaped slaves.

The group was informed that one of these religious refugee sanctuaries, Casa Romero, was located near the Brownsville, Texas border.[33]

Due to the lack of economic resources, and the uncertainties of a long trip, his wife together with their five children, the last one just a baby, courageously remained in the village. During the remaining civil war years, their children attended at what was left of a poorly-equipped and understaffed elementary school located half a mile from their home.

As most fellow Salvadoran refugees, due to their lack of economic resources, and carrying no legal documents, José's group decided to make the long trip by land. That meant crossing war-torn Guatemala as well as Mexico. Not knowing the area, and fearing for their lives, in Guatemala the group decided to hire a professional border smuggler to surreptitiously help them cross both countries and reach the Matamoros/Brownsville border area. Once at the Mexican/U.S. border, the group discovered that the U.S. government would deny them political asylum or refugee status, but if they crossed the border, members of any religious refugee sanctuary would assist them in finding safety in the United States. Therefore, as many other Central American refugees, José's group swam across the Rio Grande at midnight. U.S. Border patrol officials soon arrested them for one week, and then released them to Casa Romero. They remained in Casa Romero for over a month, doing menial jobs and saving enough money for their trip to the East Coast.

In April 1985, with the economic assistance of a relative living in Arlington, VA, the five cousins flew to Arlington, VA. Once on the East Coast, José stayed with a distant Salvadoran relative and promptly found a job as a dishwasher. At the restaurant he worked long hours to save enough to pay his loans as well as to send monies to cover for his family's expenses back home. Psychologically, at all times, he lived under the permanent threat of deportation. In 1986, with new legislation and his boss's help, he was initially found eligible for the *Extended Voluntary Status* bill and a few months later for the November 1986 *Immigration Reform and Control Act* (i.e., Public Law 99-603). Thanks to that law, he was among the 150,000 Salvadorans who were granted permanent residency.

Family Reunification

Once a legal resident, José decided to begin bringing his wife and five children to the United States. Since he lacked the monies to bring his family to America, and they lacked the necessary passports and visas, José initially opted to travel to El Salvador almost every year. It took eleven years for the entire family to be reunited in Arlington, Virginia.

In 1990 the situation back home turned difficult to his two eldest children. Guerrilla forces attempted to forcibly recruit them. Immediately he instructed them to leave El Salvador and travel to Arlington. As their father, they also made the long trip by land.

In Arlington both teenagers joined their father in the crowded apartment he shared with other Salvadoran refugees. Immediately they discovered that in order to make means make, their father as the other fellow refugees held two or more low-income jobs. All adults left to work in the morning and did not return until late at night. Nobody had time to enroll in an adult education class, less to study English.

Soon after their arrival, the teenagers were enrolled in the neighborhood public high school. Due to their limited English skills, they did not find themselves welcomed despite the fact that their high school had a large number of refugee students. They were not only homesick, missed their mother and other relatives, but also felt bored in school. In the public school they soon discovered that even in the cafeteria, students voluntarily grouped themselves by ethnicity or nationality. Salvadoran youngsters had limited interaction with other Latino students, such as the Bolivians and Peruvians, and practically did not socialize with non-Hispanic whites and African Americans students.

Finally, after an eleven-year separation, the entire Garcia family was able to come reunite in the United States. In 1996 his wife together with their remaining children flew directly from San Salvador to the Washington, D.C. area. They all traveled with passports and immigrant US visas. In Arlington, they joined the rest of their family in a two-bedroom apartment that José had purchased together with his married son. The newcomers --mother and three children-- soon discovered the language barrier, they only spoke Spanish, and had to deal with the rapid acculturation to American lifestyles. It is in this context how the Garcia family enrolled in the *Empowering Families through Literacy Program.*

IV

Final Thoughts

Moving beyond invisibility will require Latino students, including the children of Salvadoran refugees, to benefit from quality educational programs that acknowledge, celebrate and develop their creativity. Considering the fact that in some of these refugee families, parents have a low formal educational background and usually speak a language other than English at home, what chances do their children have to succeed at our public schools?

I strongly believe that most refugee and immigrant Latino children, including those who come from very poor and disadvantaged backgrounds, can rise to any occasion. However, in order to succeed, they must have help.

According to the Irish poet William B. Yeats "education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." Paraphrasing him, we may suggest that in order to motivate, to "ignite" our refugee, migrant and immigrant student population, our public schools must understand the children's cultural heritage and determine which are the best ways to teach these students; they may need to adjust their approaches, methods and curriculum without lowering their high academic expectations. The children need help to come up to speed with their classmates. All this is necessary since we are working with children and families where the "educational playing field" is not "level."

Improving the academic performance of our Latino refugee students should become one of our highest priorities. Learning does not take place in a social vacuum. It takes place in a social, political and psychological context. Students must care about their schools. This will be facilitated in a school environment where youngsters are actively engaged in learning and where trust and respect have become an integral component of their classrooms. We must not forget, as the late Kurt Lewin's meta-theory of thinking suggested, that learning as a type of human behavior, results from the interaction between student's perceptions and the educational approaches used by our educators.[34] Honoring this way of thinking the student and his or her characteristics become central to planning for their academic success.

Experience has shown that most Latino refugee students, despite their past traumatic experiences, are ambitious, resilient, and diligent about learning English. They are also very serious about their studies. The big challenge for these youngsters is how to learn the English language without compromising their academics. Therefore, schools must tailor their pedagogical techniques to what works best for these youngsters while assisting them in linking their previous knowledge and experiences--in making connections--to their new knowledge. This may become a particular challenge to those teachers educating children whose parents had to flee the horrors of civil strife.

When educating refugee children, local and regional school authorities must also ask themselves what are their long term educational goals and perspectives. This is particularly important since, as UC Berkeley's Chancellor Berdahl's recently suggested, the process of who will go to college begins in elementary school, in first grade, not when a student graduates from high school and applies to college.[35] The importance of keeping a long-term perspective in the educational process was initially suggested almost a century ago by John Dewey in his classic *The Child in the* Curriculum when he asked:

> "Of what use, educationally speaking, is it to be able to see the end in the beginning? How does it assist us in dealing with the early stages of growth to be able to anticipate its later phases...? To see the outcome is to know in what direction the present experience is moving, provided it moves normally and

> soundly. The far-away point, which is of no significance to us simply as far away, becomes of huge importance the moment we take it as defining a present direction of movement. Taken in this way it is no remote and distant result to be achieved, but a guiding method in dealing with the present..."[36]

Arlington's *Empowering Families Through Literacy* program attempts to address some of these new challenges. Our project specifically addresses the educational needs of poor, limited-proficiency-in-English Latino refugee families with inadequate literacy-related knowledge and skills. The program teaches parents how to read and write, while it simultaneously provides their children with additional practice in reading. Although highly motivated to learn how to read and write, none of these families had access to literacy-stimulating preschool experiences. Furthermore, due to the long working hours of both parents, their children often return to empty apartments where there is no parent available to help them with their school chores.

Increased parental involvement in the educational process is also another of EFTL goals. As our schools become increasingly diverse, many new immigrant parents, especially those who are not fluent in English, do not feel at ease while attending teacher-parent conferences or PTA meetings with longtime residents. Teachers need more than just translation help. In order to influence the lives of each child, especially the children of limited-English speaking refugees, educators must increasingly work closer with minority families and help them create the most positive setting possible for their children to succeed. While interpreters and school outreach officers are essential in parent-teacher conferences and in public meetings, it is essential to develop alternative ways to improve parents' access to schools such as visiting families at their homes or scheduling meetings to fit parents' needs (e.g., before school, after school, weekends). Any school information or materials sent home should, whenever possible, be written in the family's home language. Together, all these policies will help narrow the existing gap between immigrant families and their public schools.

As in most educational programs, the knowledge and skills of the families (adults and children) participating in the EFTL program is very diverse. While the majority are very poor and share a linguistic and cultural background, there are also important differences. While some live in print-free environments, we did have an adult student whose eldest son was a Roman Catholic priest serving at a Maryland parish. The level of English fluency among these families also varies. While in a few cases some children are registered at their neighborhood schools without knowing a word of English, most EFTL children know some English but do need additional help in order to succeed in school.

In closing, moving beyond invisibility will require our schools and communities to promote positive attitudes and behaviors among our Latino students. Communities and schools must provide youngsters with a caring, encouraging and safe environment, and help them become optimistic about their personal future. However, due to a number of circumstances, the current structure of most of our schools often continue making minority students academic failure inevitable. These students and their families often get blamed for their educational deficiencies.[37]

In order to reverse this situation, as Jim Cummins has argued, educational stakeholders must undergo the difficult task of redefining their approaches, methods and roles, not only in the classroom, but also in their dealings with their local communities as well as with the society at large.[38] They must focus more on positive issues, such as the creative ways that these youngsters have responded to the hardships and opportunities or which have been their main academic and non-academic accomplishments, rather than focusing on their deficiencies and limitations. We all want our students to become creative, critical thinkers. Trusting and having confidence in their abilities and potential will breed success.

Notes

1. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my GMU colleagues, as well as to my CARECEN and LULAC friends who helped design and carry out Arlington's family literacy project. In particular to Professor Larry Bowen, Marcela Von Vacano, Emma Violand-Sánchez, Mauricio Alarcón, Saul Solórzano, and Edmundo de León.

2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin: 1995-2050*, document P25-1130, issued February 1996.

3.opus cit.

4. President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, *Our Nation on the Fault Line: Hispanic American Education*, Washington, D.C., September 1996.

5.opus cit.

6. L. S. Vygotsky. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* Edited by Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, and Ellen Souberman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978. See especially chapter 4.

7. See Luis C. Moll, C. Amanti, D. Neff, and N. Gonzalez. "Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms." *Theory into Practice* 31 (2) : 132-141, 1992.

8.Jim Cummins, "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention," in *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 56 (1) : 18-36, February 1986. Cummins model assumes that " ... the social organization and bureaucratic conditions within the school reflect not only broader policy and societal factors but also the extent to which individual educators accept or challenge the social organization of the school in relation to minority students and communities." (Pg. 19).

9.Manish Jain, "*Constructing Open Learning Communities to Inspire a Changing World,*" UNESCO ED/LWF. Paper read at the 41st Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), "Education, Democracy, and Development at the Turn of the Century." Mexico City, Mexico, March 19-23, 1997.

10. Such as the mechanistic/ reductionistic view of systems vs. complexity; the objective vs. the subjective; the modern vs. the traditional; the universal vs. the cultural specific and pluralistic; the public vs. the private; the real vs. the virtual ; the secular vs. the religious; the urban vs. the rural, individual vs. the community; the male vs. Female vs. Gender; the nation-state vs. the supra-national vs. Local; and the individual vs. the community.

11. See chapter one of Susan Oboler's *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

12. It is not my intention to offer an overview of the complex characteristics of the American immigration process and its impact on formal education. A number of excellent studies are available. See among others, the works of Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut, especially their 1996 book *Immigrant America: A Portrait*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

13. Aida Hurtado, "Variations, Combinations and Evolutions: Latino Families in the United States," p. 47, in Ruth E. Zambrana, ed. *Understanding Latino Families: Scholarship, Policy, and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1995.

14. Morton Inger, "Increasing the School Involvement of Hispanic Parents," *ERIC Clearing House on Urban Education*, Digest Number 80, August 1992.

15. Cf. Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach. *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican American Immigrants in the United States.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

16. *Culmore's Club Character*, serving the Falls Church, Virginia community, is a successful, local after-school program targeting youngsters ages 7-12. Its central focus is on homework help and tutorial assistance by adults. According to an evaluation conducted by Virginia Cooperative Extension's 4-H Office of after School Projects, 95% of the youngsters exhibited more responsible behavior such as turning in assignments and being on time; 92% of youth participants improved their academic skills; and 90% exhibited a behavioral improvement. [Data provided by Rev. Stephen Rhodes, Minister, Culmore Methodist Church, Falls Church, Va].

17. See Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970 edition. Also, for more information about the life and work of Paulo Freire, please visit the homepage of the Instituto Paulo Freire at: http://www.ppbr.com/ipf/

18. I will use Latino, rather than the *official* U.S. government's ethnic label Hispanic, to refer to any person of Latin American origin or descent living in the United States.

19. In 1979 a *12-year Civil War* exploded between the Salvadoran government and the *Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front* better known as FMLN. During this period, over 75,000 Salvadorans were killed and more than one million fled their country. A large part of the country's economic and social infrastructure was destroyed either by the military activity or by other factors related to the Civil War. On 16 January 1992 at Mexico City, the Chapultepec Peace Agreement which put an end to the Salvadoran armed conflict was signed between the Government of El Salvador and the *Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front*.

20. Arlington County, Virginia. *1990 Census Highlights: Overview*, Arlington, VA: Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, August 1991.

21. Arlington County, Virginia. *1990 Statistical Brief: Hispanic Population*, Arlington, VA: Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, 1991.

22. A non-family household is one where one person either lives alone or shares the household with an unrelated person. cf.. Arlington County, Virginia. *1990 Statistical Brief: Latino Population*, Arlington, VA: Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, 1991. Pg. 6

23. Arlington County, Virginia. *1990 Statistical Brief: Latino Population*, Arlington, VA: Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, 1991.

24. Arlington Public Schools, *Summary of K-12 Civil Rights Statistics as of October 18, 1996*. Planning and Assessment Office.

25. Arlington Public Schools, *Summary of K-12 Civil Rights Statistics as of October 18, 1996*. Planning and Assessment Office.

26. Nan Henderson, *Student Assistance Journal*, November-December 1995.

27. Also known as *coyotes* or *"border smugglers"*. For a fixed fee --ranging from few hundred to a few thousand dollars-- these professional border smugglers assist any undocumented foreign alien in crossing the American border.

Border smugglers are not limited to Central American immigrants or refugees. According to U.S. News and World Report (4/4/97) U.S. immigration officials estimate that 80 to 90 percent or more of the aliens sneaking into the United States from Central America, China, India, and Pakistan are being aided by a smuggler. It is impossible to get hard numbers, but the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that every year from 200,000 to 300,000 Mexican and Central American nationals attempt to enter the United States with the aid of these traffickers.

28. Defining and measuring literacy is a challenging task, on its own. Definitions of literacy commonly emphasize reading, writing and computation skills, but disagree on the criteria for establishing the skill level. There is no consensus on the most adequate instruments to assess literacy as well as on the various notions of determining what it means to be literate. While some see literacy as a single set of skills measured along a continuum, others argue that it is better portrayed as the ability to perform specific print-related practices in specific social contexts, thereby inferring the existence of "many literacies."

29. See among other publications, Virginia P. Collier's *Promoting Academic Success for ESL Students: Understanding Second Language Acquisition for School*, published by New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Bilingual Educators (NJTESOL-BE), 1995. Also, Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier's two reports to Arlington Public Schools: *"High School Survey Comparison of Language Minority Students and Native English-Speaking Students,"* Report N° 1, June 1995; and *"The Long-Term Effectiveness of Arlington County Programs for English Learners,"* Report N° 2, July 1997.

30 See Paulo Freire's works, particularly, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum, 1970; and Ira Shor's (Editor), *Freire for the Classroom*, Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Publishers, 1987.

31 See John L. Hammond, "Popular Education in El Salvador: Lessons for College Teachers," in *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 29 (3): 103-111. Hammond has also authored a forthcoming book: *Learning Together: Popular Education and Guerrilla War in El Salvador*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

32 A pseudonym, for privacy reasons.

33 For more information on the Central American religious refugee sanctuaries as well as on "underground railroad" please see Mauricio Alarcón's "*Central Americans in the U.S.*," unpublished manuscript, Jesuit Refugee Services, 1984; and Mark R. Stoll's "Crusaders against Communism, Witnesses for Peace: Religion in the West and the Cold War," in *The Cold War West*, Kevin Fernlund, ed., University of New Mexico Press, in press (1998).

34 cf. Kurt Lewin (1890 - 1947) field theory of behavior which holds that human behavior (B) is a function of the person (P) and the environment (E). As one of the founding fathers of social psychology, he was one of the first to analyze the contributions of personality and social environment to human behavior. For an overview of Lewin's work please see: C.S. Hall and G. Lindzey's *Theories of Personality*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978.

35 UC Berkeley Chancellor Berdahl's Commonwealth Club Address after Proposition 209: *Addressing the Fundamental Issues of Educational Inequity*. San Francisco, Friday 23, 1998.

36 cf. John Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, 1902.

37 cf. John L. Hammond's "Popular Education in El Salvador: Lessons for College Teachers," in *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 29 (3): 103-111. September 1997.

38 cf. Jim Cummins, "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention," in *Harvard Educational Review*, 56 (1) 18-36. February 1986.